

>> Snapshot



Tigger Blaize

Actor

Equity



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Can you tell me a bit about your career to date?

I'm an actor and trained at Rose Bruford College. I've worked mainly in the theatre and have done film and TV work too. My main focus is physical theatre, working with mask and puppetry. I also do children's theatre.

What do you like most about your work?

I love the variety and flexibility it gives me in my life. I need to be creative. In fact, I'm miserable when I'm not.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The biggest challenge of being a freelance performer is being reliant on other people to say, "Yes, you can have that job, or do that work."

Of course, to some extent you are always reliant on other people because you always need an audience, and usually a venue. However, increasingly performers are finding less conventional ways to get their work out there, using things like crowd funding, or other creative paths and perhaps this is something I can also explore.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

Unemployment led me to seek out new skills, and in 2008 I qualified as a ski instructor, which on the face of it looks like a departure from being an actor. However, there is a huge element of performance in this role. As an instructor, you demonstrate skills and present your personality to get people to believe in you and trust your guidance.

I've also overcome a fear of training and now deliver mask workshops as well as anti-homophobic bullying workshops, which is something I feel strongly about. These workshops are based on a film I was in, created in a joint venture between

Stonewall and Team Angelica. It was distributed to every school in the country.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

There are numerous challenges. Sometimes it's financial, for example, a recent course I did on puppetry cost £400. It was a good course, but that's a lot of money to find. Or it might be lack of time. Sometimes it may even be the fear of putting yourself into a new situation.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I've attended the Goal setting, Vision Board and Resilience workshops. The Goal Setting workshop was the most useful as it came at just the right time for me – and it was a brilliant course. At that point I was thinking of changing agents, this seemed like a mammoth task to me, so I had been putting it off.

The workshop offered solutions, including strategies for breaking down a large campaign into smaller chunks, making it more manageable, realistic and achievable. Ticking off completed tasks gave me a massive sense of achievement, and still spurs me on.

What are the most important things that you've learned?

As a result of putting my plans on a vision board I feel more organised and accountable. Having a written plan gives me much more impetus to take action and get things done! Since the workshop, I have updated my show reel, made a voiceover reel, updated my website and had headshots taken. These are all significant things that needed to be done to take me nearer my bigger goal. The addition of deadlines meant that I did all of this within two months rather than it dribbling on indefinitely. Even though my life is crazy,



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fragmented and unpredictable, I'm managing my time better. Having my plan on a board lets me know at a glance what I need to do on any given day. I'm using Twitter more, though I think this needs to be the next workshop I attend at the FEU!

Other tangible benefits include greater focus, which has led to my recent participation in a fantastic set of Trans Shakespeare workshops with the Women's Shakespeare Company of Los Angeles. This has put me in touch with other like-minded individuals, and I have received a couple of offers of collaboration! It's all a chain reaction.

It's great to know that FEU Training is there to help at times when you are floundering, when you feel there are gaps in your skills or to introduce you to the idea of diversifying and learning new skills. Feeling like there is somewhere to go, someone who can understand and enrich your career is very reassuring. Thank you FEU!

What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

There are several reasons: crucially, the training is developed especially for freelancers so we learn skills that

are wholly relevant to improving our working lives. The fact that it's free is a real help because getting the right training can be terribly expensive, especially considering the necessity to invest in the core skills development that I need to do.

It's a stimulating learning environment that works for creatives, as you learn with like-minded people who are not just actors but musicians and writers too. You realise that everyone is dealing with different versions of the same problems. It's uplifting to meet other people who are coping with these challenges and it's also helpful to get a broader industry view. All in all, I think it is a vital resource that we desperately need to help with career progress.



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